

Amendments to the Claims:

Please amend claims 46, 89, 90 and 92-98.

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

Listing of Claims:

1-42. (Cancelled).

43. (Previously Presented) A system adapted for use with a rotatable tubular and a drilling fluid, comprising:

a marine riser;

a housing disposed above a portion of the marine riser having a first housing opening and a second housing opening, both to communicate the drilling fluid received from the marine riser;

an inner member rotatable relative to the housing and having a passage through which the rotatable tubular may extend;

a pressure relief mechanism blocking one of the housing openings, the pressure relief mechanism adapted to open at a predetermined fluid pressure; and

a seal moving with the inner member to sealably engage the rotatable tubular.

44. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 43, wherein the pressure relief mechanism comprises:

a rupture disk blocking one of the housing openings to block fluid communication from the housing.

45. (Cancelled).

46. (Currently Amended) A system adapted for use with a rotatable tubular and a drilling fluid, comprising:

a marine riser;

an assembly removably disposed above a portion of the marine riser, the assembly comprising:

an inner member having a radially ~~outward~~ outwardly facing surface rotatable relative to the marine riser and the inner member having a passage through which the rotatable tubular may extend;

a radially outwardly disposed outer member;

a plurality of bearings interposed between the radially ~~outward~~ outwardly facing surface of the inner member and the radially outwardly disposed outer member; and

a seal moving with the inner member to sealably engage the rotatable tubular so that said assembly manages pressure on the drilling fluid ~~in the marine riser~~ while the tubular rotates; and

a housing having a housing opening, the assembly removably disposed ~~within~~ with the housing; and

a flexible conduit having a first end and a second end for communicating the drilling fluid from the housing opening.

47. (Cancelled).

48. (Previously Presented) A system adapted for use with a drilling fluid, a marine riser and a tubular, comprising:

a housing adapted for positioning above a portion of the marine riser, comprising:

a housing opening to discharge the drilling fluid received from the marine riser,

an assembly removably positionable within the housing, comprising:

a sealing member, which rotates relative to the housing, and seals with the tubular; and

a pressure relief mechanism blocking the housing opening, the pressure relief mechanism adapted to open at a predetermined fluid pressure.

49. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 48, further comprising:

a flexible conduit having a first end and a second end for communicating the drilling fluid from the housing opening.

50. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 48, wherein the housing permits substantially full bore access to the marine riser.

51. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 48 further comprising an ocean surface, wherein a portion of the housing extends above the ocean surface.

52. (Previously Presented) A method, comprising:
positioning a marine riser relative to an ocean floor;
disposing a housing above a portion of the marine riser;
rotatably sealing a rotatable tubular with the housing; and
pressurizing a drilling fluid in the marine riser, comprising:
blocking an opening in the housing to block fluid communication from the housing; and
clearing the opening at a predetermined pressure of the drilling fluid.

53. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 52, wherein the step of disposing a housing above a portion of the marine riser comprising:
receiving the drilling fluid from the marine riser through an opening in the housing.

54. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 53, further comprising the steps of:
connecting a flexible conduit to the opening; and
discharging the drilling fluid through the flexible conduit.

55. (Cancelled).

56. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 52, wherein the step of rotatably sealing a rotatable tubular with the housing comprising:

rotating an inner member relative to the housing; and
sealing the inner member with the rotatable tubular.

57. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 52, wherein the step of rotatably sealing a rotatable tubular with the housing comprising:

removably positioning an assembly with the housing, a portion of the assembly rotatable relative to the housing; and
sealing the rotatable tubular with the portion of the assembly.

58. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 57, further comprising the steps of:
unsealing the rotatable tubular from the portion of the assembly; and
removing the assembly from the housing,
wherein the housing remains disposed above the portion of the marine riser.

59. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 52, wherein the step of disposing a housing above a portion of the marine riser comprising:

positioning a portion of the housing above an ocean surface.

60. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 52, wherein the step of positioning a marine riser relative to an ocean floor comprising:

fixing the marine riser to the ocean floor.

61. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 43, further comprising:

a flexible conduit for communicating the drilling fluid from at least one of the housing openings.

62-63. (Cancelled).

64. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 43, wherein the housing permits substantially full bore access to the marine riser.

65. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 43, the pressure relief mechanism further comprising:

a connector, attachable to one of the housing openings, comprising:

a pressure relief mechanism adapted to fully open at a predetermined fluid pressure.

66. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 65, the connector further comprising: a valve adapted to shut off fluid flow from the connector.

67. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 66, wherein the valve is remotely operable.

68. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 65, further comprising:

a flexible conduit, attachable to the connector, for communicating the drilling fluid from the marine riser.

69. (Cancelled).

70. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 48, further comprising:

a connector, attachable to the housing opening and the pressure relief mechanism adapted to fully open at a predetermined fluid pressure.

71. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 70, further comprising:

a valve for closing the connector.

72. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 71, wherein the valve is remotely operable.

73. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 70, the connector comprising:
a rupture disk configured to rupture at a predetermined fluid pressure.

74. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 49, wherein the first end of the flexible conduit is attached to the housing, and wherein the flexible conduit compensates for relative movement between the housing and the second end of the flexible conduit.

75. (Previously Presented) A system adapted for use with a drilling fluid and a rotatable tubular, comprising:

a marine riser;

a housing disposed above a portion of the marine riser and having a first housing opening and a second housing opening, both to communicate the drilling fluid received from the marine riser;

an inner member rotatable relative to the housing and having a passage through which the rotatable tubular may extend;

a rupture disk blocking one of the housing openings to block fluid communication from the housing; and

a seal moving with the inner member to sealably engage the rotatable tubular.

76. (Previously Presented) A system adapted for use with a drilling fluid and a rotatable tubular, comprising:

a marine riser;

a housing disposed above a portion of the marine riser and having a first housing opening and a second housing opening, both to communicate the drilling fluid received from the marine riser;

an inner member rotatable relative to the housing and having a passage through which the rotatable tubular may extend;

a connector, attachable to one of the housing openings, comprising:

a pressure relief mechanism blocking connector, the pressure relief mechanism blocking connector adapted to open at a predetermined fluid pressure;
and
a seal moving with the inner member to sealably engage the rotatable tubular.

77. (Previously Presented) A system adapted for use with a marine riser, a drilling fluid and a tubular, comprising:

a housing adapted for positioning above a portion of the marine riser, comprising:
a housing opening to discharge the drilling fluid received from the marine riser,
an assembly removably positionable with the housing, comprising:
a sealing member, which rotates relative to the housing, and seals with the tubular; and
a connector, attachable to the housing opening, comprising:
a rupture disk configured to rupture at a predetermined fluid pressure.

78. (Previously Presented) A system adapted for use with a marine riser, a drilling fluid and a tubular, comprising:

a housing adapted for positioning above a portion of the marine riser, comprising:
a housing opening to discharge the drilling fluid received from the marine riser,
a pressure relief mechanism in fluid communication with the housing opening,
an assembly removably positionable within the housing, comprising:
a sealing member, which rotates relative to the housing, and seals with the tubular.

79-87. (Cancelled)

88. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 78, wherein the pressure relief mechanism is movable between a blocking position to block the flow of the drilling fluid and an open position to allow flow of the drilling fluid.

89. (Currently Amended) A system adapted for use with a rotatable tubular and a drilling fluid, comprising:

a marine riser for use with the rotatable tubular;

an assembly removably disposed above a portion of the marine riser, the assembly comprising:

an inner member having a ~~radial-outward~~ radially outwardly facing surface rotatable relative to the marine riser and having a passage through which the rotatable tubular may extend;

an outer member disposed with the inner member;

a plurality of bearings on the ~~radial-outward~~ radially outwardly facing surface of the inner member; and

a seal moving with the inner member to sealably engage the tubular so that said assembly manages pressure on the drilling fluid ~~in the marine riser~~ while the tubular rotates; and

a housing having a housing opening, the assembly removably disposed ~~within~~ with the housing without any of the bearings on the radially outwardly facing surface of the inner member being in contact with the housing; and

a flexible conduit having a first end and a second end for communicating the drilling fluid from the housing opening.

90. (Currently Amended) A system adapted for use with a ~~marine riser~~, a drilling fluid and a tubular, comprising:

a marine riser,

a housing having a housing opening to discharge the drilling fluid from the marine riser,

a valve in fluid communication with the housing opening to manage pressure in the marine riser,

an assembly removably positionable within the housing, comprising:

a sealing member, which rotates relative to the housing, and seals with the tubular.

91. (Cancelled)

92. (Currently Amended) A system adapted for use with a structure for drilling in a floor of an ocean using a riser, a rotatable tubular and a drilling fluid when the structure is floating on a surface of the ocean, the system comprising:

a housing disposed on top of said riser and having a first housing opening to discharge drilling fluid received from said riser;

a flexible conduit having a first end and a second end for communicating the drilling fluid from the first housing opening;

an assembly adapted for removable positioning with said housing and having an inner member, a radially outwardly disposed outer member, and a plurality of bearings, wherein

the inner member having a ~~radial-outward~~ radially outwardly facing surface rotatable relative to the riser and a passage through which the tubular may extend, and

the plurality of bearings disposed on the ~~radial-outward~~ radially outwardly facing surface of the inner member without any of the bearings being in contact with the housing;

a seal moving with the inner member to sealably engage the tubular; and

the floating structure movable independent of the assembly when the tubular is sealed with the seal and the tubular is rotating.

93. (Currently Amended) Apparatus for communicating a drilling fluid from a riser having an axis and fixed relative to an ocean floor to a structure floating at a surface of the ocean, comprising:

means for moving the drilling fluid from an opening in the riser ~~above the surface of the ocean~~ adjacent a first level of the floating structure to a second level of the floating structure above said first level, the moving means being able to compensate for relative movement between the structure and the riser so as to allow the floating structure to move independent of the riser;

wherein a first seal and a second seal spaced apart from said first seal are ~~[[is]]~~ substantially axially aligned with said riser axis, and

said first seal and said second seal are ~~[[is]]~~ arranged to seal with the tubular while the tubular is moved along an axial direction.

94. (Currently Amended) A method of communicating a drilling fluid from a riser having an axis and fixed relative to an ocean floor to a structure floating at a surface of the ocean, comprising the steps of:

allowing the floating structure to move independent of said riser;

moving the drilling fluid from an opening in the riser ~~above the surface of the ocean~~ adjacent a first level of the floating structure to a second level of the floating structure above said first level;

wherein a first seal and a second seal spaced apart from said first seal are ~~[[is]]~~ substantially axially aligned with said riser axis, and

said first seal seals and said second seal seal with the tubular while the tubular is moved along an axial direction.

95. (Currently Amended) Apparatus for use with a structure for drilling in a floor of an ocean using a rotatable tubular and drilling fluid when the structure is floating at a surface of the ocean, comprising:

a riser;

a housing disposed above a portion of said riser, the housing having a first housing opening ~~above the surface of the ocean~~;

an assembly having an inner member and removably disposed with said housing, the inner member rotatable relative to the housing and having a passage through which the rotatable tubular may extend;

a first seal and a second seal spaced apart from said first seal movable with the inner member to sealably engage the tubular; and

a flexible conduit for communicating the drilling fluid between the first housing opening and the structure whereby the structure is movable independent of the housing when the tubular is rotating.

96. (Currently Amended) Apparatus for use with a structure for drilling in a floor of an ocean using a rotatable tubular and drilling fluid when the structure is floating at a surface of the ocean, comprising:

~~a riser extending between the floor of the ocean and above the surface of the ocean, said riser having an opening above the surface of the ocean;~~

~~means~~ a first seal and a second seal spaced apart from said first seal for sealing the tubular with respect to the riser; and

a flexible conduit for communicating the drilling fluid between the riser ~~opening~~ and the structure so as to compensate for relative movement of the structure and the riser when the floating structure is allowed to move independent of the riser.

97. (Currently Amended) A method of sealing a riser having an axis while drilling in a floor of an ocean from a structure floating at a surface of the ocean using a rotatable tubular and drilling fluid, comprising the steps of:

sealing the tubular with respect to the riser with a first seal and a second seal spaced apart from said first seal;

allowing the floating structure to move independent of the riser; and

communicating the drilling fluid between ~~from~~ the riser ~~above the surface of the ocean~~ and the structure, using a flexible conduit, so as to compensate for relative movement of the structure and the riser.

98. (Currently Amended) Apparatus for use with a structure for drilling in the floor of an ocean using a rotatable tubular and drilling fluid when the structure is floating at a surface of the ocean, comprising:

a riser fixable relative to the floor of the ocean, a portion of said riser extendable between the floor of the ocean and the surface of the ocean, said riser having a top, bottom and an internal diameter;

a housing disposed on the top of said riser, said housing having a first housing opening above the surface of the ocean and an internal diameter, said first housing opening being sized to discharge drilling fluid received from said riser;

a flexible conduit having a first end and a second end for communicating the drilling fluid from the housing opening;

a bearing assembly having an inner member and an outer member and being removably positioned with said housing, said inner member being rotatable relative to said outer member and having a passage through which the rotatable tubular may extend;

a first seal and a second seal spaced apart from said first seal movable with said inner member to sealably engage the tubular;

a disconnect member to disconnect said bearing assembly from said housing;
wherein

the floating structure is movable independently of said bearing assembly when said tubular is sealed with said first seal and said second seal and the tubular is rotating.

99. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 46, wherein said housing having a housing opening, said system further comprising:

a pressure relief mechanism in fluid communication with said housing opening to manage pressure on the drilling fluid.

100. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 89, wherein said housing having a housing opening, said system further comprising:

a pressure relief mechanism in fluid communication with said housing opening to manage pressure on the drilling fluid.